

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A system for connecting a wireless device to a remote location on a computer network, the wireless device including a processor and a transmitter/receiver for sending and receiving radio frequency signals to provide two-way digital communication between the processor and the computer network, the system comprising:

5 a beacon unit disposed at a location and including a transmitter for transmitting a beacon signal into a target region adjacent to the location;

10 a beacon signal receiver circuit disposed with the wireless device and adapted to receive the beacon signal when the wireless device is within the target region, the beacon signal receiver circuit being operably connected to the processor of the wireless device;

whereby, in response to receiving the beacon signal, the beacon signal receiver circuit sends control signals to the processor of the wireless device; and

15 whereby, in response to the processor receiving the control signals, the wireless device is connected to a specific remote location on the computer network.

2. A system in accordance with claim 1, wherein the beacon signal is a radio frequency (RF) signal.

3. A system in accordance with claim 2, wherein the frequency of the beacon signal is different from the frequency used by the transmitter/receiver of the wireless device to communicate with the network.

4. A system in accordance with claim 3, wherein the modulation of the RF signal of the beacon signal carries digital information.

5. A system in accordance with claim 3, wherein the modulation of the RF signal of the beacon signal carries analog information.

6. A system in accordance with claim 1, wherein the beacon signal is an optical signal.

7. A system in accordance with claim 6, wherein the optical signal comprises light within the visible light portion of the electromagnetic spectrum.

8. A system in accordance with claim 6, wherein the optical signal comprises light within the infrared (IR) portion of the electromagnetic spectrum.

9. A system in accordance with claim 6, wherein the optical signal comprises light within the ultraviolet (UV) portion of the electromagnetic spectrum.

10. A system in accordance with claim 1, wherein the beacon signal is an acoustic signal.

11. A system in accordance with claim 10, wherein the acoustic signal is within the human-perceptible frequency range.

12. A system in accordance with claim 10, wherein the acoustic signal is within the ultrasonic frequency range.

13. A system in accordance with claim 1 wherein information indicative of a first code associated with the beacon unit is transmitted from the beacon unit as a component of the beacon signal.

14. A system in accordance with claim 13, further comprising:

a first computer disposed on the computer network;

a computer database operably connected to the first computer, the computer database including a plurality of routing information for remote locations on the computer network and a plurality of first codes and associating each of the routing information with at least one of the first codes;

whereby, upon receiving a message packet transmitted from the wireless device across the network which is indicative of a particular first code contained in the beacon signal, the first computer accesses the computer database, retrieves the routing information associated with the particular first code, and transmits the routing information associated with the particular first code across the computer network back to the wireless device.

15. A system in accordance with claim 14, wherein:

in response to receiving the routing information associated with the particular first code from the first computer, the wireless device is connected to a second computer at a remote location; and

whereby, the second computer transmits information back across the computer network to the wireless device for display to the user.

16. A system in accordance with claim 15, wherein information indicative of the first code is transmitted from the wireless device to the second computer when the wireless device is connected to the second computer.

17. A system in accordance with claim 15, wherein information indicative of a second code associated with one of the beacon signal receiver unit and the wireless device is transmitted from the wireless device to the second computer when the wireless device is connected to the second computer.

18. A system for connecting a wireless device to a remote location on a computer network, the wireless device including a processor and a transmitter/receiver for sending and receiving radio frequency signals to provide two-way digital communication between the processor and the computer network, the system comprising:

- 5 a beacon unit disposed at a location and including
- a transmitter for transmitting a beacon signal into a target region adjacent to the location;
- a memory operably connected to transmitter, the memory containing a first code which is transmitted by the transmitter as a
- 10 component of the beacon signal; and
- a beacon signal receiver circuit disposed with the wireless device and adapted to receive the beacon signal when the wireless device is within the target region, the beacon signal receiver circuit being operably connected to the processor of the wireless device;
- 15 whereby, in response to receiving the beacon signal, the beacon signal receiver circuit sends control signals to the processor of the wireless device; and
- whereby, in response to the processor receiving the control signals, the wireless device is connected to a specific remote location on the computer network.

19. A system in accordance with claim 18, wherein the first code is associated with the specific remote location on the network

20. A system in accordance with claim 19, wherein the first code includes routing information associated with the specific remote location on the network.

21. A system in accordance with claim 19, wherein the first code does not include routing information associated with the specific remote location on the network.

22. A system in accordance with claim 19, wherein the memory further contains a second code, and the second code is also transmitted by the transmitter as a component of the beacon signal.

23. A system in accordance with claim 22, wherein the second code is associated with an attribute of the beacon unit.

24. A system in accordance with claim 23, wherein the attribute of the beacon unit is the location of the beacon unit.

25. A system in accordance with claim 23, wherein the attribute of the beacon unit is a serial number of the beacon unit.

26. A system in accordance with claim 23, wherein the attribute of the beacon unit is a type descriptor characterizing the type of beacon unit.

27. A system in accordance with claim 18, wherein the first code is associated with the location of the beacon unit.

28. A system in accordance with claim 18, wherein the first code is associated with a serial number of the beacon unit.

29. A system in accordance with claim 18, wherein the first code is associated with a type descriptor characterizing the type of beacon unit.

30. A system in accordance with claim 18, whereby the beacon unit further comprises an input/output (I/O) circuit, the I/O circuit being operably connected to the

memory and adapted to receive instruction signals from an instruction source, whereby, in response to receipt of the instruction signals, the codes in the memory may be changed.

31. A system in accordance with claim 30, wherein the instruction source is a keypad.

32. A system in accordance with claim 30, wherein the instruction source is a public switched telephone network (PSTN).

33. A system in accordance with claim 30, wherein the instruction source is an RF receiver.

34. A system in accordance with claim 30, wherein the instruction source is an optical receiver.

35. A system in accordance with claim 30, wherein the instruction source is a acoustic receiver.

36. A system in accordance with claim 18, wherein the beacon signal receiver circuit, in response to receiving the beacon signal containing the first code, sends control signals indicative of the first code to the processor of the wireless device.

37. A system in accordance with claim 18, wherein the beacon signal receiver circuit further comprises a memory storing a third code; and

whereby the control signals sent from the beacon signal receiver circuit to the processor of the wireless device are indicative of the third code.

38. A system in accordance with claim 37, wherein the third code is associated with a serial number of the beacon signal receiver circuit.

39. A system in accordance with claim 38, wherein the third code is associated with a type descriptor characterizing the type of the wireless device.

40. A system in accordance with claim 18, further comprising:
a first computer disposed on the computer network;
a computer database operably connected to the first computer, the
computer database including a plurality of routing information for remote locations
on the computer network and a plurality of first codes and associating each of the
routing information with at least one of the first codes;

whereby, upon receiving a message packet transmitted from the wireless
device across the network which is indicative of a particular first code contained in
the beacon signal, the first computer accesses the computer database, retrieves the
routing information associated with the particular first code, and transmits the
routing information associated with the particular first code across the computer
network back to the wireless device.

41. A system in accordance with claim 40, wherein:
in response to receiving the routing information associated with the
particular first code from the first computer, the wireless device is connected to a
second computer at a remote location; and

whereby, the second computer transmits information back across the
computer network to the wireless device for display to the user.

42. A system in accordance with claim 41 wherein information indicative of a
code associated with one of the beacon unit and the beacon signal receiver circuit is sent

from the wireless device to the second computer when the wireless device is connected to the second computer.

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